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THE GLORY OF GOD, THE DEFENSE OF THE SOUTH.

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN THE

Methodist Episcopal Church, South,

YORKVILLE, S. C., JULY 28, 1861,

THE

DAY OF NATIONAL THANKSGIVING.

FOR THE

VICTORY AT MANASSAS.

BY

REV. JOHN T. WIGHTMAN.

TE DEUM LAUDAMUS.

PORTLAND, ME.:

PRINTED BY B. THURSTON & COMPANY.

1871.

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YORKVILLE, S. C., July 29th, 1861.

Rev. John T. Wightman:

DEAR SIR,—The undersigned were appointed a committee, in behalf of a large number of the congregation who heard your sermon last Sabbath, at this place, delivered in pursuance to the resolution of the Congress of the Confederate States, inviting our people to offer united thanksgiving and praise to the Most High for the glorious victory with which he crowned our arms at Manassas, to request of you a copy for publication.

The undersigned take great pleasure in discharging this duty, and in making known to you the high appreciation in which your effort was held, and in joining their personal solicitation in requesting a copy at your earliest convenience.

W. J. CLAWSON,
P. B. DARWIN,
W. H. McCORKLE,
J. BOLTON SMITH,
JAMES JEFFERYS.

LINCOLNVILLE, N. C., August 3d, 1861.

To Messrs. W. J. Clawson, P. B. Darwin, and others:

GENTLEMEN,—Your courteous communication, requesting the publication of the discourse delivered the Sabbath appointed for national thanksgiving, was received. It would be impossible to reproduce the phraseology, as it was delivered without a written line, yet I will endeavor to follow the track of the argument, and with cheerful reluctance yield to your better judgment by laying it as an humble tribute on the altar of our native land.

Very respectfully,

JOHN T. WIGHTMAN.

WBW 2 Nov 46

The Glory of God, the Defense of the South.

"And the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defense."—ISA. iv. 5.

THE office of a Christian minister is to preach repentance. Yet he has divine warrant in overshadowing the nation with the "burden of prophecy." Even He who came to redeem, paused on his mission to shed patriotic tears over Jerusalem. The ambassador of the Prince of Peace should not needlessly rush into the storm of battle, or into the angry debates of the forum; yet he should studiously point the eye of the nation to the cloudy pillar of Providence distilling blessings on "the dwelling-places of Mount Zion," and leading the host to "triumph gloriously."

Happy are we in possessing rulers who fear God. One month since, the nation was invoked to gird itself in sackcloth and to offer sacrifice to Almighty God. To-day, in answer to that prayer, from the banks of the Potomac to the waters of the Gulf, the atmosphere is thick with the incense of praise. "Happy is that people whose God is the Lord.

A recognition of the hand of God is a nation's defense. Blind infidelity sees nations, as fragments of a dismembered globe, distractedly drifting through history, without common design in their successive periods of being, or in the objects of their mission. But Christianity discovers them, as the tribes of Israel, each performing a distinct office, yet the whole, guided by the light of a common Providence, marching toward universal civilization. "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth, and

hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitations." Nations belong to time, not to eternity, "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all." We must, therefore, search the history of present events for the place and mission of the South. Could we discover these, could we in our wanderings and our wars follow the pillar and the cloud, the glory of God would be a defense.

The race of man, like the river of Eden, "parted, and became into four heads." The first was the Hebrew; "unto them were committed the oracles of God," and they became "the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." The germ of religion was lodged in the heart of the Hebrew. But there it was locked up in an unknown language. If, therefore, its laws be promulgated and its Messianic prophecies kindle hope among nations, they must be transferred to a universal tongue. Two hundred years before the Advent, Alexander, by his conquests, took up the meshes of the net of Greek civilization and spread them from the borders of the Mediterranean to the banks of the Ganges, giving universal language and literature to the East. This produced the Greek Scriptures, which announced Messiah in the most nervous and elegant tongue of the globe. But the Cross was erected at the confluence of three civilizations. The superscription was written in Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew. Fifty years before the Advent, the victories of Cæsar gathered the nations of the East under the wings of the Roman eagle. That eagle "seized on Africa at the point of Carthage, and Greece at the Isthmus of Corinth, and turned his eye still further toward the sun." Pompey passed into Judea over the same ford Joshua crossed, and from that hour it became a Roman province. He swept the Mediterranean of pirates and opened commerce between every town on its margin. These conquests, by giving civil organization to the dismembered continent, and by spreading over it the ægis of Roman authority, introduced and protected Christianity. Paul exclaimed, "I am a Roman;" it was a gateway through dungeons, and a passport to the pillars of Hercules.

But Christianity was not yet equipped for its mission. The tardy machinery of the old world was too cumbersome to cross the heart of a great desert, or to fly over oceans lying beyond the sun. Thus, the Germanic, the last great race, sprang into being not only with the religion, and the literature, and the organization of former races, but with nerves of fire, and sinews of steel, and a great heart to throw these energies across the globe. The hand of Providence placed under the control of this race the compass, the press, steam, machinery, and agricultural resources in successive periods of time best calculated to spread Christianity. If the Hebrew be the religious heart, the Greek the intellectual head, the Roman the all-conquering arm, then the Germanic race is the feet of humanity—the restless, winged feet, carrying the ark through a desert world to illumine man's pathway to Mount Zion above. “How beautiful are the *feet* of them that bring glad tidings of good things.” Ezekiel, in his vision of the “four living creatures” that moved the complex “wheels” of Providence, on which rested the “sapphire throne” with its “bow of brightness round about,” seems to symbolize in the “man,” the “lion,” the “ox,” and the “eagle,” the attributes of four great races mystically united in carrying forward Messiah's chariot, whose track was to lay the pathway of truth clear as crystal, and whose flight was to spread a rainbow over the gloom of the world.

From this general survey fix your eye on one spot, the belt of cotton States, and inquire what position they occupy in the interplay of the wheels of Providence? As a family of the Germanic race, they have a mission in common with the other branches, each in its own sphere. Germany, England, and the North move each in an independent, and in a common circle of labor? What, then, is ours? Is the South to play a subordinate part to one of these powers? or does she possess independent attributes qualifying her for an independent office? Here are inexhaustible agricultural treasures which the world demands, and which are deposited in no other spot from pole to pole. True, it were a benign office to be the commissariat of mankind; true, on the temporary suspension of these

supplies, processions of mothers and children stagger through the streets of New York howling for bread ; true, ships are rotting in the sea-gates of commerce, and millions of operatives in Europe are clamoring for work, with hungry graves before their eyes more clamorous to receive them ; true, the splendid capitol of the United States already begins to fulfill the prophecy : " the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it ; the owl also, and the raven shall dwell in it ; and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion and the stones of emptiness ; " true, the crown heads of civilization are in dismay, the foundations of two hemispheres shake with the death throes of commerce, and ancient cities stand aghast at the prospective picture of a naked and hungry winter ; yet I rise to a sublime aspect of our position. What are the civil and the moral influences created by five hundred millions of capital, annually produced and kept in circulation by cotton alone ? What other people throws into the channels of trade, for the benefit of mankind, so large a contribution ? Here is the chief source of commerce, which carries along with it civilization and Christianity, adorning nations with splendid cities and giving growth to institutions of letters and of religion. Our labor interpenetrates the heart of civilization. " Cotton is king." It balances the powers of nations and adjusts liberty with sovereignty. No elective government can cohere without it (or an equivalent), because it keeps power in the hands of the tillers of the soil and preserves the purity of the ballot-box. The workmen of the North are drifting into agrarian licentiousness, and their rules are forced, as a check, into centralizing despotism. There is no reserve power in the hands of conservative masses to check and balance these extremes. Tariff and taxation are becoming the strength of government rather than the products of industry and the morals of the people. In this the South is superior. Her agriculture has shaped her policy of government and constituted the States not the fractions of a unit, but the units of an integral. This adjustment of power happily allies the liberty of the people with the strength of government.

The cotton States occupy a position still more commanding.

Across them runs the breakwater to Papal and Pagan aggression. The trade-ship, freighted with their wealth, becomes a winged sanctuary carrying Bibles and missionaries to every land ; the manufactory, propelled by their profits, weaves the web of the social fabric ; and the cylinder of the press, turned by their springs of industry, throws off churches, and colleges, and colossal intellects. The cotton trade keeps the Bible and the press under the control of Protestantism.

Discovery and conquest, language and literature, have added domains to the kingdom of Christ, but the fields of the South have built the bulwarks of Zion, equipped missionaries, evangelized Africa, touched a thousand springs of benevolence, and gathered within the bosom of the church inexhaustible reservoirs of wealth and power. Blight the South, and Christianity falls paralyzed on her altars. Enrapturing visions break on the gaze of the prophet, and strangely does he connect the triumphs of the gospel with the products of the soil. "The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. The parched ground shall become a pool ; in the habitation of dragons shall be grass with reeds and rushes ; and the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." If the prophecy be symbolical, yet it applies with the wonderful fitness of truth to the redemption of our "wilderness," "desert" islands and river swamps, to our rice deltas covered like a "pool," to our meadows of "grass" and our fields of "reed"-like cotton. The South lays her "first fruits" on the altar of Christianity, and her institution is "the garden of the Lord."

These elements of power were not accumulated by fraud or stratagem in trade, policy in congress, or even by the device, or wisdom, or prowess of her sons. They are the gifts of God. The pillar of cloud dropped fertilizing dew on our soil, and the pillar of fire brought across the ocean the only tillers who could survive pestilence, and wring from the sod the blooms of silver and harvests of gold. God blessed our land, and gave to Ham the privilege of mit-

igating his "curse" by spreading Christianity with the labor of his hands. *Simon of Cyrene* bore the cross of Jesus.

If this be our mission, "the glory of God shall be a defense." No invader shall wrench from Christianity her happy laborers, no tread of armies turn into dust and ashes the "bloom of the wilderness" and the turrets of Zion, without breaking the scheme of universal Providence, and wounding that Almighty Hand, the shield of our happy people.

But the links of Providence are cycle within cycle, events moving events. In searching for traces of the finger of God, the student will often discover in a single event the germ of a nation's history and a hint of the eternal mind. Like the geologist who gathers a pebble on the sea-shore, and from its wave-cut hieroglyphics deciphers the great laws at play in the bosom of the mighty deep, so the student of Providence may trace a single touch of the finger of God in the history of a nation back to the one all-pervading mind. In discovering this in the dramatic movements of present history, we assume an axiom, *Providence never violates law*. If natural law be broken, God governs the world by miracle,—if moral, by sin. In vain do we attempt to discover the guidance and defense of Heaven in the abrogation of immutable principles.

The eminence of the South is the result of her domestic slavery, the feature which gives character to her history, and which marshals the mighty events now at work for her defense and perpetuity. Following the guidance of Providence she was led to the lively oracles, whence she received her laws and institutions from the hand of God. Her constitution received the finishing touch of Christian statesmen, and reflects the accumulated wisdom of ages. It was not extempore. It was the slow crystallization of truth, justice, and benevolence into a massive bulwark for the defense of Christian liberty. Her peculiar institution has for its warrant the example of patriarchs and prophets, the decalogue and institution of Moses, the approval of apostles, and, above all, the sanction and smile of the Son of God. In the sixth chapter of Ephesians, Paul declares it to be according to the "will of God," "servants be obe-

dient to them that are your masters, according to the flesh ; as the servants of Christ, doing the *will of God* from the heart." Here is the defense of the South, "the will of God." Her government is built on the Bible. Let Pharaoh descend with chariots of Egypt, the guiding pillar will become darkness and terror to our foes, but a pathway of glory to Israel. Under the overshadowing wings of its providence, our people have gathered with miraculous unanimity to lay the foundation of government, and our broad land of sea-coast and rice deltas and mountain coves, teeming with millions of happy slaves, sleeps in unbroken tranquillity amid the shout of cannon and the tread of advancing legions. God is here. Bayonets do not legislate for us, nor standing armies crush with the weight of cannon the uprising of disloyal masses. The pillar of fire is police and pilot. While government and religion are disintegrating at the North, deeper principles are penetrating the heart of the South, solidifying laws, developing resources, stretching out new lines of commerce, and throwing around the land a girdle of manufactories, colleges, and churches. Neither banks, nor merchants, nor planters are failing, but our heaven-planted land "of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates," waves from the Rio Grande to the Potomac with better harvests than of gold, and the clouds are dropping new title-deeds to cities more splendid than crowned Achaia's brow, and to plains more ample and fertile than Palestina's vales.

Nor are these splendid prizes to become the spoil of the North either by conquest or compromise. Two nations struggled together in the womb, and now the hand of God has severed every cord, — civil, social, and religious, — and is converting the South into a financial and national scourge to an infidel, avaricious, and blood-thirsty North. Our statesmen have devised a scheme to lay tribute on the world to support the war, and to establish an independent government. Our granaries and warehouses are under the key of a policy which will make our enemies lick the dust, and the sun and moon of Europe do obeisance to the evening star

emerging from the smoke of battle with a brilliancy that casts the radiance of hope over the whole horizon of Christianity.

If there be a heart not made of stone, if there be an eye not seared with infidelity, that eye must see the hand of God in the confluence of events, and that heart must swell with exultation at the smile of Providence, covering like a cloud the dwelling-places of our people, and leading the South along the pathway to the highest culmination of Christian civilization.

But we approach the cause more directly appropriate for this day of national thanksgiving. No work of God, no reformation can be accomplished without resistance, revolution, and blood. If we turn to Moses, Luther, or Washington, we see that hardened superstitions, obdurate vices, and oppressive tyranny only could be revolutionized by the blood of martyrs. Even he who won our liberty on the cross died in the achievement. It were, therefore, vain to hope that deluded men, inflamed by ambition or a thirst for spoils, would permit the South peaceably to assume her sovereignty, and to gather within her bosom the products of her labors. In vain did she hold out the olive-branch, in vain offer compromise, in vain delay, entreat, almost kneel down at the feet of the Republican President, still a policy was inaugurated to plunder her revenue by tariff virtually without representation; her sovereignty was denied, her valor ridiculed, her religion spit upon, and this was made legal by almost every Northern commonwealth abrogating the constitution, and by installing into the chief magistracy a blind and infatuated power that in madness rends the pillars of democratic liberty, invades the South, confiscates her property, blockades her ports, burns her cities, insults her daughters by a mercenary and brutal soldiery, and threatens to subjugate, enslave, and annihilate her sons. Well might the South spring to arms, indignant that the foot of a tyrant should be put on her neck. Her cause is holy. She has not thrown herself into the bloody arena for conquest or ambition. No; not a cent of revenue, not an inch of soil does she covet; but, with a conviction that her inherent rights are invaded,

she animates her sons with the war-cry of Nehemiah to oppressed Israel: "Remember the Lord which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses." Think you, "the God of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthæ, of David also," will permit an alien foot to burn up the fields that clothe Christianity for the skies? Think you, the angel in the cloudy pillar, who scatters the corn of heaven over our tents and vales, will allow the vermin and reptile that crawl from the dens and dungeons of the North to eat up holy bread sent to nourish the bearers of the ark? Think you, any alliance of armies and navies could annihilate the chief agents of Christianity, the press and steam; how, then, cut the sinews of slavery that give life and energy to these agents? Think you, a just God will allow Northern swords to cut up and despoil the South, blot out her liberty, paralyze civilization, annihilate inalienable rights, and blast the plans of Providence issuing in the universal triumphs of Christianity? What would be gained thereby? Could the South accomplish her mission shorn of her strength by union with the North, or crushed beneath a military despotism? She must triumph, and become independent. God will defend his providence, vindicate his decrees, and blast every attempt to abolish the institutions of the South that create harmonious interplay and dependence among nations, and equip Christianity for her celestial mission. His eye leveled the cannon that reduced Fort Sumter and asserted her independence. And when the invader with hooting and somersets came to Bethel, exclaiming, "we will throw down our rifle and meet them with corn-stalks," the angel in the cloud looked in the face of the foe and a thousand lay dead on the field. The "grand army" advanced to Manassas, with bugle and banner and banquet, moving before it walls of iron and forests of bayonets; chivalric knights, and cautious congressmen, and gallant blades, and gay women thronged from the capital, dancing with merry wine to grace the triumph. Onward it rolled in the pomp and circumstance of war, with cannon and carriages and handcuffs labeled "for Richmond." At Sabbath sunrise,

flushed with anticipated victory and bloated with lust, solid columns push forward, flanked by artillery and supported by reserve, but the angel in the pillar of fire flashed the watchword along our battle line,

“Strike—for your altars and your fires;
Strike—for the green graves of your sires;
God—and your native land,”

and ere that sun had set veteran columns melted away, batteries were taken, congressmen captured, flying horsemen and panic-stricken battalions, and imbecile generals, and terrified women “fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, even the camp as it was, and they fled unto Jordan; and lo, all the way was full of garments and vessels which the Syrians had cast away in their haste.” “Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power; thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.” “They said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil: my lust shall be satisfied on them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters.”

The ingenuity of the North cannot find a pretext for these disasters. What power overawed a formidable fleet that lay six miles from Fort Sumter during the engagement? and precipitately threw back the vain-boasting columns of Butler? and struck with causeless panic the steel-clad legions that fled from Manassas? There is but one cause. Terror seized the enemy in each instance; for “the Lord looked through the pillar of fire and of the cloud and troubled the host.”

Need we further proof of God’s providence? that our cause is just? that the South shall triumph? I see through the gloom of war a nation springing into being, disenthralled, and equipped with Christianity. I see that nation, with its sinewy arm, moving the globe, and with every beat of its heart sending out tides of commerce, like rivers of life, to bear on their bosoms the hopes and fortunes of humanity. The triumphs of Christianity rest, this very hour, on slavery; and slavery depends on the triumph of the South.

The hand of God has severed this nation to perpetuate this institution, and is inflicting judicial punishment on a people who have attempted to violate his decree: "Ham shall be a bondsman." The war is the servant of slavery. As the atmosphere may become so loaded with pestilence that nothing but lightning can disinfect it, so the sword seems necessary to draw off the bloated lust of the North, restore political vigor, and impart a serener aspect to her policy.

When the South shall be left to move, unmolested, in the cycle fixed by the finger of God, what part the children of Ham will play in that splendid panorama of the world's future history seems dimly shadowed forth by prophecy and providence. If Shem gave the Saviour, and Japheth established his kingdom, it is left for Ham to usher in the millenium. Incapable of self-preservation, his productive labor can be brought out only under the guidance of a superior race. Yet it is so identified with the triumphs of the Church, that the daughter of Africa is the "beloved" of the Spouse. "*I am black*, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Look not upon me because *I am black*, because the sun hath looked upon me; my mother's children were angry with me; *they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.*" Do men of higher pretensions scorn an agent so humble? "God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not to bring to nought things that are,—that no flesh should glory in his presence."

The hand of God is collecting agents to dig, and polish, and set "precious stones" in that glorious wall which shall crown the city of the great King. Ham shall extract them from the soil, Japheth carry them in ships, and Shem set them in the "twelve foundations." If to-day war seems to check the missions of these great tribes of man, yet they have brought humanity to a point in its ascent where it may await the bursting of storm and the convulsion of earth; thence, by a more vigorous reunion of energies, rise

higher and yet higher beyond the trials and transformations of war, until it reaches the summit, glorious in serenity and eternal in splendor.

The South may pause for a moment on her mission, but the war-cloud that overhangs her sky casts portentous shadows across the globe. Amid the gloom events thicken around her whole horizon, giving promise that the "Sun of Righteousness is arising with healing in his wings." We stand at a crisis in history. Civilization and Christianity are mustering all their forces for a tremendous conflict. The "seventh seal" is about to be broken, and the "seventh trumpet" is about to sound. Students of the Apocalypse remark that the course of predicted events at first move slowly, as one after one, six of the seven seals are opened, but that on the opening of the seventh the process is accelerated, making the seventh period as fertile in events as the foregoing six together; that the sounding of the seventh trumpet condenses incidents in a period equal to the sounding of the six previous ones. Slowly has the world evolved its history, but this century is accumulating and centering agents. Agriculture and machinery, discovery and conquest, science and literature, are revolving around the Cross. With a heart beating with hope, the Christian seer strains his eye through the misty future to catch the first glowing outlines of the kingdom of Christ. Auspicious dawn! rise in effulgent splendor over a globe enveloped in the smoke of battle; kiss the tear from the eye of humanity, melt its heart into love, and unite the labor of its million hands in erecting the Cross over a ruined world. Then shall weapons of war be transformed into implements of husbandry, the clanking of the captive's chain into songs of liberty, and dungeons of criminals into the sanctuary of saints.

"All crime shall cease and ancient fraud shall fail,
Returning justice lift aloft her scale,
Peace o'er the world her olive wand extend,
And white-robed innocence from heaven descend.
No more the North against the South shall rise,
And ardent warriors meet with hateful eyes;

The useless lances into scythes shall bend,
 And the broad falchion in a plow-share end;
 The lambs with wolves shall graze the verdant mead,
 And boys in flowery bands the tigers lead;
 The steer and lion at one crib shall meet,
 And harmless serpents lick the pilgrim's feet."

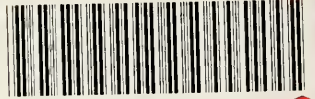
All glorious day! dawn on these realms of woe and sin. Blessed mediator, bid the angry surges of the nation "be still;" bid Boston and Charleston exchange shouts of peace; bid the Andes nod to the Alps, and the hoarse waves of the Atlantic chant wooing praises to the Pacific, till Earth, with her girdle of song and her wings of light, soar singing and shining forever in her happy orbit around the throne of eternal Love.

Christian patriots, ye for whom the heroes of Manassas bled, the Congress of the Confederate States invokes you this day to offer praise to the most High, not that your enemies have been slain, God forbid, but that His glory has been vindicated, and the besom of destruction, that threatened to overthrow the turrets of Zion and the bulwarks of our liberty, has been driven back to its boundary. Praise Him, not with idle taunts and inflated boasting, but with prayers that assuage the agony of the dying, and with hands of mercy that bind the wounds of the bleeding. Praise Him, that His cloudy pillow of providence defended so many of your sons amid tempests of blood and iron hail. Praise Him, that our Joshua and our Moses, he who led the host to battle, and he who controls the councils of the nation, were the objects of His tender care. Praise Him for your harvests; praise Him for your government; praise Him for your triumphs; "praise Him with the sound of the trumpet" in the camp; "praise Him with the psaltery and harp" in the temple; "praise Him with the timbrel and dance" in your dwellings; "praise Him mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and all cedars, both young men and maidens, old men and little children. Praise ye the Lord." Amen.





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